CULTURE

Page 7 – Cubans' Struggles Today: A Personal Account

EL CENTRAL HISPANIC NEWS

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SPORTS

Page 10 – finals at the Metro Detroit Golden Gloves

La alcaldesa anima a los jóvenes de la ciudad a considerar los oficios especializados

Sheffield dice que pueden impulsar el futuro de Detroit

por Eric Guzmán para Detroit Free Press USA TODAY NETWORK • reimpreso con permiso

Un grupo de 100 estudiantes de secundaria de Detroit ayudó a instalar vidrio, colocar ladrillos y doblar tuberías en la futura sede del American Indian Health and Family Services en el suroeste de Detroit, brindando a los estudiantes una mirada de primera mano a una variedad de trabajos en oficios especializados.

El evento, organizado por Sachse Construction el 16 de abril, se llevó a cabo en un momento en que los estudiantes tienen que considerar cómo la inteligencia artificial afectará la economía y los trabajos que podrían estar disponibles cuando se unan a la fuerza laboral.

Eso era lo que pensaba Tyrese Freeman, de 18 años y estudiante de último año en Osborn High School, quien dijo que planea cursar estudios de HVAC (calefacción, ventilación y aire acondicionado) en Ferris State

Continúa en la página 8

Sofia King, 15, of Monroe, a member of the Dream Seekers program offered by the American Indian Health and Family Services, works at bending aluminum to wrap a window. She was among the high schoolers at the future home of the American Indian Health and Family Services headquarters on April 16 in Detroit. / Sofia King, de 15 años, de Monroe, miembro del programa Dream Seekers ofrecido por los Servicios de Salud y Familias Indígenas Americanas, trabaja doblando aluminio para envolver una ventana. Photo by Mandi Wright/Detroit Free Press

Mayor Encourages Youth in City to Look at Skilled Trades

Sheffield says they can boost Detroit's future

by Eric Guzmán • Detroit Free Press USA TODAY NETWORK • reprinted with permission

A group of 100 Detroit high school students helped install glass, lay brick and bend pipes at the future headquarters of the American Indian Health and Family Services in Southwest Detroit, giving students a firsthand look into a variety of skilled trades jobs.

The event, held by Sachse Construction on April 16, took place at a time when students are having to consider how artificial intelligence will affect the economy and the jobs that might be available when they join the workforce.

That was on the mind of 18-year-old Tyrese Freeman, a senior at Osborn High School, who said he plans to pursue HVAC studies at Ferris State University after high school.

"Not to attack any profession, but, those behind-the-computer jobs, those things go away," Freeman said. "You're

Continues on page 8

Después de autodeportarse, ¿qué sigue?

Por Erick Díaz Veliz

Hubo un día en que Nicolás López-González bajó de un avión y respiró el aire de Estados Unidos por primera vez. Lleno de esperanza, junto a sus padres y dos hermanos menores, se estableció en Dearborn, Michigan, para perseguir el sueño americano. Su padre había obtenido permisos de trabajo y lograron ingresar como solicitantes de asilo. Niko, como le dicen sus amigos, hizo de Michigan su nuevo hogar. La familia jamás imaginó que cinco años después, en medio de toda la maquinaria antiinmigrante de Trump, se encontrarían de regreso en Bogotá, Colombia, para empezar de nuevo.

"Aunque he pasado parte de mi vida aquí en Bogotá, todavía me siento como un completo extranjero", confiesa. En el barrio Usme de la capital colombiana, Niko, de 20 años, ya lleva un año y asiste a la universidad. El haber vuelto a Colombia sigue siendo un reto para él y sus hermanos. Bogotá es diferente a cualquier ciudad de Michigan; es una ciudad de 8 millones de habitantes rodeada de montañas, con mucho tráfico y transporte público. Aunque dice que la comida es de las mejores que ha probado, todavía le cuesta transportarce, lidiar con las calles llenas de motocicletas y el ruido de la ciudad.

"Algunas personas me han dicho que tengo muchas cualidades interesantes, cosas que son bastante diferentes de una persona típica de Bogotá", dijo. "No tengo muchos amigos aquí, ya que todos tienen sus propias vidas, y hay días en los que me siento solo. Todos mis amigos están en Estados Unidos."

El proceso de reintegración de López-González se

Continúa en la página 4

Amidst an intense immigration crackdown, entire immigrant families are being forced to decide between remaining in the US or self-deporting once a family member is deported. Upon returning to the country from which they migrated, they must start anew, relearn their surroundings, and fit in once again, a process of reintegration that entails social and cultural challenges for those involved. Before self-deporting to Colombia, Nicolas Lopez-Gonzalez and his family walk along the riverfront in Downtown Detroit.

After Self-deporting, What Is Next?

By Erick Diaz Veliz

There was a day when Nicolas Lopez-Gonzalez stepped out of a plane and breathed the air in the United States for the first time. Full of hope, alongside his parents and two younger siblings, he settled in Dearborn, Michigan, to pursue the American dream. His father had obtained working permits, and they managed to enter as asylum seekers. Niko, as his friends call him, made Michigan his new home. The family could never have imagined that five years later, amidst the full force of Trump's anti-immigrant machinery, they would find themselves back in Bogota, Colombia, to start over once again.

"Although I've spent part of my life here in Bogota, I still feel like a complete foreigner," he confesses. In the Usme neighborhood of

Continues on p. 9

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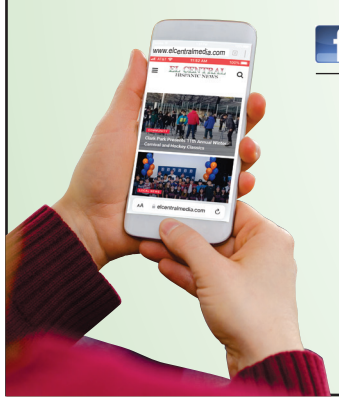

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EL CENTRAL HISPANIC NEWS

2 **Community** Pura Vida

3 **Legacy** UM and VOCES Collaborate on Oral History

4 **Opinion** Letters from Readers

5 **Youth** Detroit Six-Point Plan for Summer Youth

7 **Travel** Reflections on Trip to Cuba

10 **Sports** Metro Detroit Golden Gloves, Dikwa Double Downs Detroit City

13 **Editorial** 10 Things You Can Do Now by Robert Reich

14 **World's Cultures** The Kalinago People, Dominica, Novelist Jean Rhys

“Pura Vida in Detroit”: How Jessie Feliz Is Redefining Language Learning Through Joy and Community

By Andrés Ospina | Photos by Jessie Feliz

“Pura Vida” (Pure Life) is a common expression in Costa Rica used to say hello, goodbye, or that everything is good. More than a phrase, it reflects a lifestyle rooted in joy, gratitude, and a positive outlook on life. For Jessie Feliz, that philosophy is not just something she learned. It is something she lives.

Raised in Detroit and shaped by a family of educators and caregivers, Feliz did not initially set out to become an entrepreneur. Her journey began in a high school Spanish classroom, where a teacher from Nicaragua sparked a lifelong fascination with language, identity, and human connection. “I fell in love with how she moved between English and Spanish so effortlessly,” Feliz said. “It was beautiful.”

That moment set her on a path beyond Michigan. After studying Spanish education at Western Michigan University, she traveled to Costa Rica, choosing a less traditional destination. Living with a local family, she experienced a way of life that felt meaningful, even outside her own culture and language. “It just felt like home,” she said.

That sense of belonging shaped both her teaching philosophy and her life. After completing her studies and earning a master’s degree in teaching, Feliz worked in Baltimore, where she encountered the diversity of the Spanish-speaking world in ways textbooks could not capture. In classrooms filled with students from El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and other countries, she began to understand how language intersects with identity.

Her time in the classroom also reshaped her approach to teaching. Students questioned textbook vocabulary, saying it did not match how their families spoke at home. Instead of dismissing those differences, she adapted. She came to see that language is shaped by culture and lived experience. “I realized I had to be inclusive,” she explained. “Language is lived. It’s not just what’s in a book.”

At a later point, Feliz returned to Costa Rica, where she built a life centered on teaching, community, and family, working with both local children and expatriate families. During that time, she also became a mother, giving birth to her daughter.

Eventually, she returned to the United States and made her way back to Detroit, where she began shaping what would become Spanish SWAG. The idea grew out of her classroom experience and frustration with how language is often taught in schools. “The way languages are often taught to pass a test,” Feliz noted. “Not to actually use it.”

The turning point came during the pandemic, when a school district asked her to create instructional videos, worksheets, and lesson plans. What began as a temporary solution evolved into a digital platform built with no-code tools and years of teaching experience. Today, Spanish SWAG is used by schools and after-school programs across Michigan, providing structured lessons, interactive materials, and video instruction led by Feliz herself. “It’s like digital copies of me,” she said.

What sets her work apart is not just the curriculum, but the approach behind it. When asked what makes her program different, she pointed to one word: “Joy,” adding, “you must activate joy for students and the teacher. They need to move, create, and participate to truly learn.”

That philosophy comes to life through lessons that combine language with movement, music, cooking, and art. Students learn vocabulary while preparing food or practicing dance, connecting words to real experiences. “They don’t just learn the word. They feel it,” she explained.

At the center of her work is a strong commitment to community. In Detroit, Feliz opened a learning center that serves children ages 5 to 12. The space, once a long-abandoned building, was transformed through grants and partnerships into a vibrant environment for after-school programs, camps, and cultural learning.

The center is designed to be accessible to families from all backgrounds. By accepting childcare subsidies and keeping costs aligned with public assistance rates, Feliz ensures participation is not limited by income. “We have kids from all walks of life,” she said. “But everybody belongs.”

Her work is also deeply connected to the surrounding neighborhood. Through partnerships with local organizations and volunteer work, she has built relationships that extend beyond the classroom. Her long-term vision is to expand the Jessie Feliz Learning Center into multiple locations and become a trusted presence in communities across the city.

As her work continues to grow, Feliz has also gained recognition within Detroit’s entrepreneurial ecosystem, including a $15,000 award from the Detroit Startup Fund to support the expansion of Spanish SWAG.

Looking ahead, Feliz plans to continue developing Spanish SWAG and expanding its reach while staying grounded in her mission. She also hopes to support Hispanic families who want their children to strengthen their Spanish, whether learning from scratch or building on what they hear at home. “Everyone is welcome here,” she said.

In a city known for resilience and reinvention, Jessie Feliz is building something rooted in purpose and experience, bringing together education, culture, and community in a way that reflects her journey and her values. Like the phrase that anchors her story, it all comes back to a simple idea. Pura vida.

To learn more about Spanish SWAG, visit https://www.spanishswag.com

Andrés Ospina is a Detroit-based freelance journalist and business consultant covering business, entrepreneurship and economic development. Originally from Colombia, he holds a double major in Communications and Journalism and an MBA from the University of Exeter (UK). His work connects the dots between his experience supporting small businesses, startups and organizations and his background in journalism, bringing a practitioner’s perspective to the stories he tells.

“Pura Vida en Detroit”: Cómo Jessie Feliz está redefiniendo el aprendizaje del idioma a través de la alegría y la comunidad

Por Andrés Ospina | Fotos por Jesse Feliz

“Pura Vida” es una expresión común en Costa Rica que se utiliza para saludar, despedirse o decir que todo está bien. Más que una frase, refleja un estilo de vida basado en la alegría, la gratitud y una visión positiva. Para Jessie Feliz, esa filosofía no es solo algo que aprendió, sino algo que vive.

Criada en Detroit y formada en una familia de educadores y cuidadores, Feliz no pensaba convertirse en emprendedora. Su historia comenzó en una clase de español en la secundaria, donde una maestra de Nicaragua despertó en ella una fascinación por el idioma, la identidad y la conexión humana. “Me enamoré de cómo pasaba del inglés al español con tanta naturalidad”, dijo Feliz. “Era hermoso”.

Ese momento marcó su camino más allá de Michigan. Tras estudiar educación en español en Western Michigan University, viajó a Costa Rica, eligiendo un destino menos tradicional. Viviendo con una familia local, experimentó una forma de vida que le resultó significativa, incluso fuera de su cultura. “Se sentía como hogar”, dijo.

Ese sentido de pertenencia definió su filosofía educativa y su vida. Luego de completar sus estudios y obtener una maestría en enseñanza, trabajó en Baltimore, donde conoció la diversidad del mundo hispanohablante más allá de los libros. En aulas con estudiantes de El Salvador, República Dominicana y otros países, comenzó a entender cómo el idioma se cruza con la identidad.

Su experiencia en el aula también transformó su forma de enseñar. Los estudiantes cuestionaban el vocabulario de los libros, señalando que no coincidía con cómo hablaban sus familias. Entendió que el lenguaje se moldea por la cultura y las experiencias vividas. Así que adaptó su enfoque. “Entendí que debía ser inclusiva”, explicó. “El idioma se vive, no es solo lo que aparece en un libro”.

Más adelante, Feliz regresó a Costa Rica, donde construyó una vida centrada en la enseñanza, la comunidad y la familia, trabajando con niños locales y familias expatriadas. Durante ese tiempo, también se convirtió en madre.

Con el tiempo regresó a Estados Unidos y volvió a Detroit, donde comenzó a desarrollar lo que hoy es Spanish SWAG. La idea surgió de su experiencia en el aula y de su frustración con la forma en que se enseñan los idiomas en las escuelas. “Muchas veces se enseñan para pasar una prueba, no para usar el idioma”, señaló.

El punto de inflexión llegó durante la pandemia, cuando un distrito escolar le pidió crear videos, hojas de trabajo y planes de lección. Lo que comenzó como una solución temporal se convirtió en una plataforma digital construida con herramientas accesibles y años de experiencia docente. Hoy, Spanish SWAG se utiliza en escuelas y programas extracurriculares en Michigan, ofreciendo contenido estructurado, materiales interactivos y clases en video dirigidas por la propia Feliz. “Es como tener copias digitales de mí misma”, dijo.

Lo que distingue su trabajo no es solo el contenido, sino el enfoque. Al preguntarle qué hace diferente a su programa, respondió con una palabra: “alegría”, y añadió que es necesario activarla tanto en estudiantes como en docentes, promoviendo el movimiento, la creatividad y la participación para lograr un aprendizaje real.

Esa filosofía se refleja en clases que combinan el idioma con movimiento, música, cocina y arte. Los estudiantes aprenden vocabulario mientras preparan comida o practican baile, conectando palabras con experiencias reales. “No solo aprenden la palabra, la sienten”, explicó.

En el centro de su trabajo está la comunidad. En Detroit, Feliz abrió un centro educativo que atiende a niños de 5 a 12 años. El espacio, antes abandonado, fue transformado mediante subvenciones y alianzas en un entorno activo para programas extracurriculares, campamentos y aprendizaje cultural.

El centro está diseñado para ser accesible a familias de todos los niveles. Al aceptar subsidios de cuidado infantil y mantener costos alineados con asistencia pública, busca eliminar barreras económicas. “Tenemos niños de todos los contextos”, dijo. “Pero aquí todos pertenecen”.

Su trabajo también está profundamente conectado con el vecindario. A través de alianzas con organizaciones locales y trabajo voluntario, ha construido relaciones que van más allá del aula. Su visión a largo plazo es expandir el Jessie Feliz Learning Center a múltiples ubicaciones y convertirse en un referente comunitario en la ciudad.

A medida que su proyecto crece, Feliz también ha sido reconocida dentro del ecosistema emprendedor de Detroit, incluyendo un premio de $15,000 del Detroit Startup Fund para apoyar la expansión de Spanish SWAG.

De cara al futuro, planea seguir desarrollando el programa y ampliando su alcance sin perder de vista su misión. También busca apoyar a familias hispanas que desean fortalecer el español de sus hijos, ya sea desde cero o reforzando lo aprendido en casa. “Todos son bienvenidos aquí”, afirmó.

En una ciudad conocida por su resiliencia, Jessie Feliz está construyendo algo con propósito, conectando educación, cultura y comunidad de una manera que refleja su historia y sus valores. Como la frase que guía su camino, todo vuelve a una idea simple: pura vida.

Para más información sobre Spanish SWAG, visite https://www.spanishswag.com/.

U of M and VOCES Collaborate on Oral History Project

By Ozzie Rivera

The School of Social Work at the University of Michigan and VOCES: Southwest Detroit History recently collaborated to hold oral history workshops at the school in Ann Arbor and in Southwest Detroit. Starting with a three-part workshop series at Congress of Communities in late January and early February a concerted effort has been made to elevate the VOCES Collective's efforts in documenting Southwest Detroit's Latino rich history that dates back over 100 years.

Recently national attention was given to this often-neglected history as an almost two-mile section of our neighborhood was designated a national historic district! As regular readers of my EL CENTRAL columns may know, one of my passions is documenting our community's history. As you can imagine, I, along with so many others, was so excited when this designation was announced in late January.

Over the past few years, members of VOCES: Southwest Detroit History have stepped up efforts to document this history in video and written form. The team's work caught the attention of the University of Michigan's School of Social Work ENGAGE office and they decided to fund workshops on how to conduct oral histories. ENGAGE's mission is to facilitate partnerships between community groups and the School of Social Work staff and students. Thus, their support of this series.

U of M students and staff listen during VOCES workshop.

Representatives from School of Work Student Government, ENGAGE team and VOCES.

Workshops were facilitated by VOCES archivist, social worker and museum specialist Irma Andrade-Guzman. It kicked off with the three-part Congress of Communities workshop series for their youth leadership group. Held in January and February this year, attendance at these sessions ranged from 12 to 18.

The other community workshop was held Saturday, April 11th at the Mexicantown Community Development Center (MCDC) where 20 attended. It was an interesting and much welcomed multi-generational gathering with attendees ranging in age from their late 20's through their mid 70's. This allowed for great inter-generational dialogue during the session.

Irma Andrade-Guzman facilitating an oral history workshop at the University of Michigan.

Two University of Michigan workshops were held on the Ann Arbor campus. The first one on January 28th saw 22 in attendance. The final session was held on Monday, April 13th and it saw an increase in attendance with 30 students and faculty present.

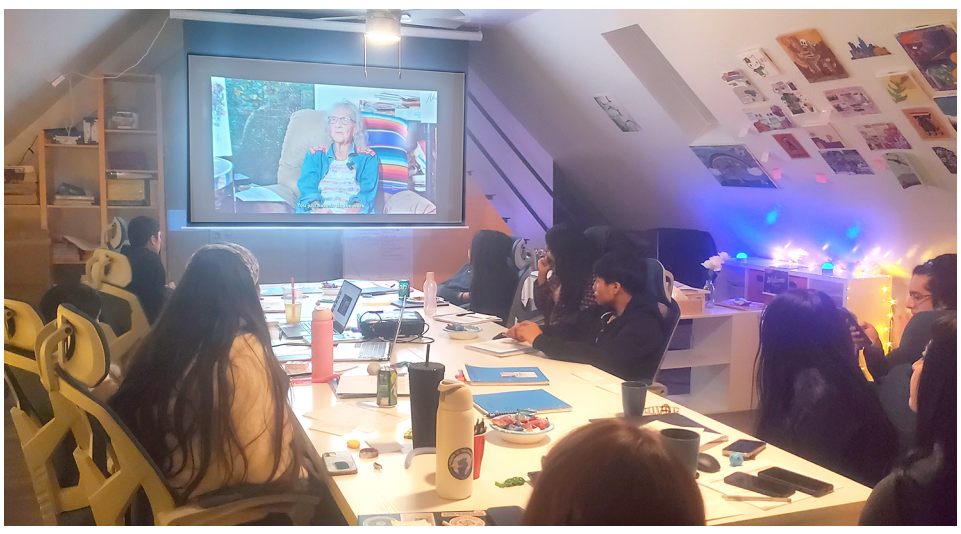
Workshops covered topics such as an Overview of Southwest Detroit Latino History, Storytelling – What it is and its Importance, How to Conduct Interviews among other themes.

To learn more about VOCES' and their documentary efforts you can scan the QR code to view video clips of interviews the team conducted, some as far back as 2010-2011. You can also search VOCES: Southwest Detroit History on Facebook and other social media.

Ozzie Rivera, a retired social worker, is a cultural activist and musician who currently teaches on Afro-Latino History and Culture at Wayne State University and social work at the University of Michigan.

Ozzie Rivera presenting on Power of Storytelling.

From the workshops attended by youth at Congress of Communities.



WE GET LETTERS / RECIBIMOS CARTAS

Unlocking Michigan's Talent: Why Language Support Must Replace Labels by Megan Syed

As a child, Nora told me, she was immediately mislabeled as a special education student simply because she hadn't yet learned English—a mistake her parents, trusting the system, didn't feel comfortable questioning. Nora was classified as cognitively impaired, a label that followed her for years and placed her into separate classrooms, where she often felt embarrassed, isolated, and confused. These days, Nora makes sandwiches in a deli, but she often wonders how her life might have changed if her first language, Arabic, had been treated as an asset rather than a disability.

I met Nora when I worked with multilingual learners in Detroit and her story is never far from my mind every time I enter my classroom. I don't want any of my students to be limited by a label.

Stories like this play out across Michigan all the time. Nearly 45% of English learners also are identified as having a learning disability, compared to 35% non-English learners. When multilingual learners are misidentified for special education, they are often subjected to lower academic expectations and stripped of rigorous, grade-level instruction.

Michigan must stop treating a student's native language as a deficit to be managed and start seeing it as an intellectual strength to be cultivated. Here are some ways to make that happen:

Let's start by addressing the Great Lakes State's shortage of educators certified to teach multilingual learners. Without these specially trained teachers who know the ins and outs of helping students new to English grasp the language, schools are often unable to tell the difference between a disability and language development, which ultimately puts more strain on an already underfunded special education program. Michigan should offer scholarships so more teachers are able to seek this certification, as well as provide annual stipends to show the value of these added skills. Although the number of teachers with English as a Second Language endorsements has grown in recent years, those endorsements still only account for a small fraction of all certified teachers statewide, increasing about 53% since the 2017-18 school year but remaining far below the fastest growing student group population in Michigan.

For me, becoming an English Language Learner coach was something that required years of coursework, classroom experience, and training on second language acquisition, assessment, and culturally responsive instruction. I learned how to determine whether a student needs language support rather than being referred for special education services. For example, when 3rd grader Arianna struggled to explain her ideas during a math discussion about solving multi-step word problems, I noticed she didn't know words such as "total," "add," or "subtract," and instead tried to explain herself using gestures and vague phrases. I provided her with fill-in-the-blank sentence frames and a key terminology word bank so she could bridge the gap between understanding the math and being able to say it out loud. Within weeks, she was confidently participating in discussions.

In addition to investing in more specially certified teachers to expand support of multilingual learners, Michigan must also provide ongoing training so that all teachers know the difference between a language gap and a true learning disability. Session topics could include how to analyze language samples, assessment data, and classroom performance.

In my classroom, training such as this enabled me to quickly recognize that Ty, a 3rd grader who struggled to sequence events during a science lesson on the water cycle, fully understood the concept but lacked the vocabulary and sentence structures to explain his thinking. By incorporating a graphic organizer, visuals and a labeled diagram to support Taseer's explanations, his response significantly improved, confirming that language support was the needed intervention.

Nora's story reminds us that when we mislabel a language gap as a disability, we risk limiting someone's future before it even begins. We must move past seeing a child's home language as a hurdle to overcome and instead embrace it as a foundation to build upon.

Megan Syed serves as an English Language Learner coach at Lincoln Park High School in Lincoln Park, Michigan, where she co-teaches language arts. She is a 2025-2026 Teach Plus Michigan Policy Fellow.

Dear Editor,

I read with interest Mr. Rogelio Landin's opinion piece in the April 9 issue of EL CENTRAL. As someone with over forty years of experience in the electrical industry, including nearly twenty-five years as the Chief Electrical Inspector for the City of Detroit, I would like to contribute to this important community discussion.

Mr. Landin's comments focus on three aspects of data center construction: water, power, and employment opportunities. The experiences of other communities across the country since the data center boom began offer valuable insight into these areas.

Data center site selection hinges on the availability of large amounts of inexpensive water and access to significant electrical power. These two aspects are the driving forces behind the several sites being considered in Michigan and throughout the Midwest. Detroit, of course, has easy access to both.

Problems for communities surrounding existing and planned Data Centers emerge quickly once the true scale of these projects is described. For example, the planned Data Center in Saline Township is expected to draw 25% of DTE's TOTAL generating capacity, and this project is only one of many anticipated, including one in Detroit's east side.

There is a similar issue with the volume of water required. for these projects. A medium-sized data center (smaller than the planned operation in Saline Township), consumes nearly 110 million gallons annually...enough for roughly 1,000 homes. New technologies may reduce water requirements, but they will be specific to the developer and the site.

These issues are in addition to the noise from a 24-hour, constantly operating Data Center, which has been a source of complaint in West Virginia and other places where Data Centers have been built.

Finally, the issue of jobs /infrastructure which is central for all of us in Detroit. Data Centers provide a significant number of construction jobs while being built, and very few jobs afterwards. Data centers require minimal staffing for operation, and those jobs will be filled by highly trained technicians.

Any "pie in the sky" notion that Data Centers will help alleviate our employment issues in Detroit is just that. Developers ALWAYS promise jobs while seeking community approval. Think Comerica Park, Little Caesars Arena, and every other major project in Detroit in the past twenty-five years. None of these has produced jobs other than minimum wage employment.

I think our City Council did the right thing in calling for a two-year pause on approving data Centers in Detroit, while new facts emerge.

I hope these perspectives help inform our community's discussion on this important issue.

Sincerely,
Phil Clark

Después de autodeportarse

Continuado de la página 1

extiende a todas las personas que regresan a sus países después de años; comienza en el momento en que llegan a su país de origen, pero continúa durante meses e incluso años después de haberse restablecido. La Dra. Maria Lapinski-LaFaive, profesora de Comunicación Intercultural en la Universidad Estatal de Michigan, explica que quienes regresan enfrentan un choque de reentrada, también llamado choque cultural inverso, un conjunto particular de desafíos sociales y psicosociales, que incluyen el desarraigo cultural y, en ocasiones, incluso barreras lingüísticas.

"El choque de reentrada a veces es más difícil que otros tipos de choque cultural, en parte porque es inesperado. Muchas personas no lo conocen y no lo anticipan", dijo Lapinski-LaFaive. "Hay muchas razones por las que es difícil volver a la propia cultura: la cultura de origen ha cambiado, los roles de la persona pueden haber desaparecido, pueden haber perdido el ritmo de la cultura, y por estas razones, las interacciones pueden no ser tan fluidas como antes."

También puede ser difícil porque la propia persona ha cambiado, añadió. Estos cambios pueden incluir la forma de hablar, vestir, pensar o actuar de manera distinta a las personas de su cultura original. "Han visto una forma diferente de vivir, y eso cambia cómo interactúan con su cultura de origen", mencionó Lapinski-LaFaive.

El choque de reentrada puede estar relacionado con la depresión, la soledad y el estrés; por ello, recomienda que las personas intenten enfocarse en los aspectos positivos de sus experiencias tanto en la cultura que dejaron como en la que están retomando. También señaló que ser consciente de que esto puede ocurrir y tener planes a largo plazo para afrontarlo puede ser de ayuda.

Agentes de inmigración detuvieron al padre de Lopez-González a principios de febrero de 2025 y lo deportaron tres semanas después. El joven había recibido una citación federal para presentarse en un edificio en la avenida Michigan en Detroit.

Al llegar, le dijeron que regresara con sus padres; cuando lo hizo, tuvo que traducirle a su padre por qué se lo estaban llevando. De no ser por sus hermanos menores, su madre también habría sido arrestada, y si López-González no hubiera estado todavía en la secundaria, los tres habrían sido detenidos.

"Mi mamá y yo vivíamos con miedo constante, aterrados de que si algo así le pasaba a mi papá, lo mismo podría pasarnos a nosotros. Por eso decidimos irnos", dice. "Era estar juntos o nada, y era mejor decir 'nos vamos' que ser arrestados, encerrados y deportados sin nada", dijo López-González. El miedo de su madre no era infundado.

En la América de Trump, la decisión para muchas familias inmigrantes, si permanecer juntas o no, se ha convertido en una carga muy pesada. Christine Sauve, del Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, dijo a EL CENTRAL que, al igual que la familia de López-González, "familias en todo Michigan están enfrentando decisiones muy difíciles y desgarradoras". Además del impacto de decidir si salir o no del país, existen distintas etapas del estatus migratorio que pueden determinar la

Continúa en la página 9

City of Detroit Announces 6-point Plan for Summer Community Safety, Youth Engagement

Mayor Mary Sheffield recently joined with a coalition of city and community leaders to unveil a new six-point community safety plan to address recent trends and to install preventive safety measures to foster further improved public safety ahead of this year's warm weather months. The plan incorporates the Detroit Police Department, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood and Community Safety and other city departments, community mental health partners and direct input from neighborhood block clubs and Detroit's youth.

"I've said many times that we cannot arrest our way to a safe city, it is going to take a broad range of strategies that address not only criminal behavior but the circumstances that create the opportunity for it to occur," Mayor Sheffield said. "This plan has been built around the areas where we see the greatest opportunity for prevention of significant safety issues as we head into the warm weather months."

The plan, which will be expanded over the next two months to layer in additional strategies, includes the following approaches:

1. Safe Storage and Gun Safety Education and Resource Campaign
2. New Neighborhood Safety Action Teams to identify and address block-level crime issues
3. After-Hours Venue Engagement Strategy to address problem locations
4. DPD Safe Summer Strategy focusing on block party safety/ crowd control, parks and recreation centers, curfew compliance and drag racing/ drifting
5. Conflict Resolution and Restorative Practices Task Force
6. Youth Engagement Strategy

"Over the past several years, violent crime in Detroit has reached 60-year lows, although the onset of warmer temperatures often brings with it a rise in incidents," said Chief Todd Bettison. "Mayor Sheffield has been adamant that to continue the city's trend of lower levels of crime, the city must continue strategies that have proven successful and introduce new preventive strategies."

City of Detroit Announces 6-point Plan for Summer Community Safety, Youth Engagement

Here is a breakdown of Sheffield's 6-poing plan:

Gun Safety and Storage Campaign. An urgent piece of the Mayor's community safety initiative is a holistic strategy to encourage personal gun safety and storage. The campaign will include a robust social media campaign and direct community engagement at sites across the city. The City has secured nearly 2,000 gun locks that it will distribute for free to households that have guns they wish to secure to keep their family safe. Half of the gun locks are being provided by the Detroit Public Safety Foundation thanks to a grant from Henry Ford Project Child Safety. The administration also will be doing extensive community engagement with families and youth of all ages through the Hope Starts Here, Detroit Parent Network, DPSCD and Charter schools, Grow Detroit's Young Talent, SER Metro and others. Sheffield also shared a powerful video (add link) on child gun safety that will be shared across the city's social media platforms.

"Too often our community has had to mourn the loss of an innocent child whose natural curiosity cost them their life when they encountered an unsecured weapon," said Mayor Sheffield. "A simple gun lock and family education are the easiest way to prevent another unnecessary tragedy."

Neighborhood Safety Action Teams. This strategy focuses resources where crime has clustered — including troubled locations that have become magnets for blight and unwanted activity. City leaders from multiple departments will conduct weekly walks in targeted areas to assess conditions on the ground, then direct increased patrols, improve lighting, and address repairs and other environmental issues where they are needed most. This is not top-down policing. This is community driven. Residents can recommend high-risk locations directly — because neighbors are partners and co-owners of public safety on their blocks. Everyone has a role to play. And when neighbors are engaged and city resources are responsive, crime does not get a foothold.

After Hours Venue Engagement and Enforcement. DPD and BSEED will identify after hours locations that have the highest rate of police runs, code violations and community complaints and city officials will work with the establishments to develop plans to improve security and lighting at the locations. DPD and BSEED also will increase enforcement at establishments with the most resident complaints police runs. If issues continue to go unaddressed the city will, if necessary, close an establishment.

DPD Safe Summer Strategy. The Detroit Police Department will activate several successful strategies that have worked in recent years, including drag racing & drifting enforcement, block party compliance and crowd control at large community gatherings and curfew enforcement. DPD also will pay special attention to the city's most active parks and recreation centers to have a more visible presence to deter any potential issues. As part of its curfew enforcement, DPD will detain juveniles out after curfew and issue Parental Responsibility tickets of $250 for the first offense and $500 for subsequent offenses.

Mayor Mary Sheffield surrounded by administration and community partners. Photos: Sydney Bowden

"I am confident that the Mayor's Summer Safety Plan will continue driving crime down across our city," said Detroit Police Chief, Todd A. Bettison. "These strategies—focused on youth engagement, Neighborhood Safety Action Teams, after-hour venues and conflict resolution—give our public safety professionals more tools and resources than ever before. But most importantly, it is a proven fact that when law enforcement and the community work together, it creates a powerful partnership—and that is how we keep Detroit safe."

Conflict Resolution & Restorative Practices Task Force. The Mayor's Office has established a new task force to develop and implement new strategies that will be rolled out later this summer. Members of the task force include city department heads, CVI groups and behavioral health professionals to address conflict in our neighborhoods before they escalate.

"Individuals closes to the problem are close to the solutions." Teferi Brent, Director of Office of Neighborhood and Community Safety said. "It is incumbent upon us to equip our residents with the tools to resolves conflicts on their own without the involvement of law enforcement to intervene,"

Youth-centered activations. Mayor Sheffield recently met with a group of high school students who had organized a large gathering of teens downtown the weekend before. Out of that conversation an agreement was reached between the city and the youth to create expanded opportunities for teens to enjoy their city at large-scale activations designed just for them. The Mayor is working on a plan for a youth-centered event at Hart Plaza that will include two DJs, basketball courts, gaming trucks and more. The event will run from 5-9 PM and will be free and open to all youth.

The Mayor previously announced plans for "Occupy the Summer," which will include activities and activations such as expanded Recreation Center hours until 11 PM during the summer, the return of "Midnight Basketball" for young adults and other activities. Full details of Occupy the Summer will be announced in May.

CITY OF DETROIT

RESIDENTIAL MID-BLOCK LIGHTING EXPANSION PROGRAM

- *Mayor Sheffield has signed an Executive Order directing the Public Lighting Authority (PLA) to implement city wide neighborhood lighting improvements.*
- *As a result, PLA will be installing thousands of additional lights on residential blocks to improve public safety and quality of life.*
- *The City of Detroit and PLA are hosting a series of community meetings to hear directly from residents.*
- *Following community engagement, a plan/schedule will be presented to the PLA board and City Council for approval.*

Please come out and share YOUR FEEDBACK!

DISTRICT 6
April 29 • 6 – 8 p.m.
Clemente Recreation Center
2631 Bagley Street

MAYOR MARY SHEFFIELD

Bridging Neighborhoods Community Meeting #3
Bridging Neighborhoods Reunion Comunitarias #3

The Gordie Howe International Bridge will open soon. Started in 2017, the Bridging Neighborhoods Fund has provided funding for a Home Swap program for residents in and near Delray and the I-75 Environmental Mitigation Program, which addressed sound and air pollution for homes near the expanded I-75 service drive.
El Puente Internacional Gordie Howe abrirá pronto. El Fondo de Bridging Neighborhoods, iniciado en 2017, ha financiado un programa de Intercambio de viviendas para residentes de Delray y sus alrededores, y también el Programa de Mitigación Ambiental I-75, que abordó la contaminación acústica y atmosférica en las viviendas cercanas a la vía de servicio ampliada de la I-75.

At this 3rd Community Meeting,
- Provide feedback on a proposal for the Bridging Neighborhoods Fund incorporating input shared at the March 24th and March 26th community meetings

En esta 3.ª reunión comunitaria:
- *Proporcionar comentarios sobre una propuesta para el Fondo Bridging Neighborhoods, incorporando las aportaciones compartidas en las reuniones comunitarias del 24 y 26 de marzo.*

April 28, 2026 6-7pm 28 de abril 6-7pm
CHASS Center
5635 W. Fort St

Questions? *¿Preguntas?*
Call / *Llame* 313-628-2231
or email
bridgingneighborhoods@detroitmi.gov

Spanish interpretation will be provided. With advance notice of seven calendar days, the City of Detroit will provide interpreter services at public meetings, including language translation and reasonable ADA accommodations. Please contact the Civil Rights, Inclusion and Opportunity Department at (313) 224-4950, through the TTY number 711, or email crio@detroitmi.gov to schedule these services.

Se proporcionará interpretación al español. Con un preaviso de siete días calendario, la Ciudad de Detroit proporcionará servicios de interpretación en reuniones públicas, incluyendo traducción de idiomas y adaptaciones razonables de la Ley para Personas con Discapacidades (ADA). Para programar estos servicios, comuníquese con el Departamento de Derechos Civiles, Inclusión y

Detroit Riverfront Conservancy: Riverfront Fish Fest

Join us for an exciting, fun-filled day on the Detroit Riverfront as we bring together two beloved events, Sturgeon Day and Kids Fishing Fest. This family-friendly event is FREE to attend and the perfect opportunity to explore the wonders of wildlife and conservation while also experiencing the world of fishing.

At Riverfront Fish Fest, you'll have the opportunity to meet a live sturgeon and learn all about their fascinating life and vital conservation efforts to protect them.

New and experienced anglers will enjoy a day full of fishing fun including a chance to win prizes and visit with partner organizations throughout the day.

-All children must be accompanied by a parent, grandparent or legal guardian who will be required to sign a Release & Wavier when registering.

-Loaner poles will be available. Valid ID must be provided by an accompanying guardian to borrow equipment. Please note that a valid Michigan fishing license will be required for any guardians wishing to fish with their child. Fishing is free for kids 16 years of age and younger. To purchase a fishing license visit: https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/fishing/license-info

-Giveaways are first come, first served despite pre-registration

-Event will be held rain or shine.

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Network with Corporate & Public buyers. Explore potential supplier opportunities for your products and services.
Connect with organizations through our resource fair - Grow your company with their tools and services
April 27, 2026
Northwest Activities Center
18100 Meyers Rd
3PM - 7PM
REGISTER HERE
Detroit Economic Growth Corporation

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Volunteer Registration
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Cubans' Struggles Today: A Personal Account

By Hadley Hawks

I recently traveled to Cuba as part vacation and part humanitarian relief, bringing with me over 60 pounds of supplies to support the people in Cuba. Although this was my second trip to Cuba, I was originally motivated to go there after the loss of my partner, who had left Cuba a few years prior. I wanted to see with my own eyes, what is it that the Cuban population is experiencing to drive upwards of one million of them off the island since 2021.

A local man dropping off trash at one of various trash piles in the streets of Havana.

I went back this time, to bring necessary materials for families in need, such as medicine, clothes, portable chargers, hygiene products, bug spray, sunscreen, among other items. It is not permitted to send packages or mail to Cuba from the United States, and it is becoming increasingly difficult for Cuban people to find resources imperative to survival.

Six People fit into the back of what used to be a four seater SUV, converted into seating for taxi purposes.

The current fuel crisis has rapidly changed the island and the way of life just over the course of roughly three months. Varadero, a beach city on the North coast of Cuba and considerably Cuba's biggest money maker from the tourism it brings, was empty, with few to no tourists roaming the island. A round trip taxi ride from La Habana, the capital of Cuba, to Varadero, roughly 75 miles, last year cost $150. This year, it was $300, doubling in price. I also was required to confirm my taxi trip weeks in advance, this way the fuel would be saved up and put away specifically for my trip. The fuel crisis does not look like paying more in gas prices, it's simply that there is not any fuel available to buy.

Those who are able have switched to electric tricycles, which still remain unreliable, considering the power outages experienced throughout the island on a daily basis. They are unable to be charged if there is no electricity to charge them. They are used to transport passengers for a small fee, and I frequently saw exceeding amounts of people piled into the back of tricycles, solely to skip what would be an hour walk to work or school. While riding through Varadero on a tricycle, we passed by blocks of bare and power outage stricken streets, in a place where just months before, tourists and Cubans alike strolled up and down the streets at all hours of the night.

The fuel crisis has also taken a toll on Cuban education. Cuba has prided itself on its health and education systems for years, arguably one of their main 'exports'. While speaking with nursing students studying in La Habana, for a short period of time, their classes had been moved to online platforms, due to a drop in attendance as more and more students could not find transportation to arrive to class. A good idea in theory, however a wide amount of students do not have laptops, much less a stable internet connection. Many do not have wifi in their homes, as it is unrealistic to pay for a service that will not work for the up to 12 hours a day they pass without electricity. Unfortunately, it had been mentioned to students that they would have to repeat the year or semester of school, as a result of so much information and class time missed during their time online, and a pandemic of chikungunya, a mosquito transmitted disease which left students out of school for up to a month in late 2025.

I had the opportunity to speak with multiple Cubans, and I asked them the simple questions of "What do you want for yourself? What would you like your future to look like?" The overwhelming response was "to leave here (Cuba)," and "they don't let us dream," said one Cuban man per the restrictions the government holds over the people.

Cubans have a well rounded education system, and there is no cost of attending university. However, when a taxi driver can earn more than a doctor, Cubans are forced to choose survival over passion.

After leaving Cuba, I am struck by the way people are able to survive in a country that continues to test their limits, taking more and more from them each day. Cubans then are forced to hear their own government officials claim that their people are exceedingly strong and resilient, instead of changing policies to alleviate their suffering.

Hadley Hawks is a student at Wayne State studying communications and Spanish with a passion for journalism. She is based in Detroit, MI and has reported on community events in her hometown of Battle Creek. She is interested in continuing her reporting on community and cultural issues in Detroit.

A fruit cart in the streets of Havana from which people sell produce and where the majority of Cubans buy their groceries.

La Casa Del Ron, a Rum shop and tasting center on the most popular tourist avenue in Varadero.

Deteriorating buildings of once beautiful and colorful architecture in central Havana.

Graffiti of former leader Fidel Castro stating "ever onward to victory", a saying of the Castro communist regime per their fight against capitalism, painted on the side of a crumbling building in Havana.

The capitol building in Havana, one of the only buildings in the city that is consistently maintained. Freshly painted vintage cars sitting in front, waiting to pick up tourists for taxi excursions.

Mayor Encourages Youth in City to Look at Skilled Trades

Continued from page 1

always going to need to eat. You're always going to need clean clothes. You're always going to need HVAC technicians ... so the biggest thing is the job security."

Sachse Construction CEO Todd Sachse said the event began 12 years ago as part of the company's social mission to support Detroit youth through life skills and skilled labor.

The best approach, said Sachse, wasn't just to talk to students about the skilled trades, "but actually talk to and do hands-on work with actual skilled tradesmen and women, and show them what they do and let them actually do it."

Michigan has a projected 35,000 annual job openings from 2022 to 2032 in skilled trades, according to the state. Detroit Mayor Mary Sheffield noted the gap and encouraged young people to look into skilled trades.

"There's tens of thousands of skilled trade jobs available throughout the state of Michigan. Detroit, we have numerous projects that are up and coming. And the workforce around skilled trades is aging," Sheffield said. "We need younger people to get into these roles and these positions and help create and build the future of our city."

'Room to grow'

The construction site, the American Indian Health and Family Services (AIHFS), has special meaning to some of the students who took part on April 16.

More than 100 Detroit high school juniors and seniors, along with Detroit Mayor Mary Sheffield and Sachse Construction CEO Todd Sachse, visited the under-construction American Indian Health and Family Services headquarters to learn about skilled trade jobs on April 16 in Detroit.

AIHFS is an urban Native American, federally qualified health center that also hosts activities for youth. Its Dream Seekers program serves youth between the ages of 11 and 17 and incorporates traditional Native American teachings to help support each member's well-being. April 16's event was the first time students in that group got a chance to see the new building.

Sofia King, 15, of Monroe, has been with the Dream Seekers since 2019 and said she is excited for the future of the AIHFS. The group has been involved in planning for the new building.

"I have seen it grow from so many different people and I think it has so much more room to grow here, with this building, and having the resources for the youth," King said. "As an urban Native and a youth, not being connected to my people, this gives a place for purpose, for everybody, and I think that's amazing."

Photos by Mandi Wright, Detroit Free Press

Todd Sachse, CEO, Sachse Construction, left, poses with Detroit Mayor Mary Sheffield; Chasity Dial, President American Indian Health and Family Services; and Jason Lee, President and CEO Junior Achievement of Southeastern Michigan.

AIHFS that has been around since 1978, and operates out of a former Catholic church on Lawndale Street in Southwest Detroit and serves about 2,000 patients.

"We needed to expand to really optimize our integrated care model," said AIFHS CEO Chasity Dial, a member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. "We offer primary care, behavioral health services with traditional Native American healing practices that incorporates contemporary western medicine with traditional practices."

"There's tens of thousands of skilled trade jobs available throughout the state of Michigan. Detroit, we have numerous projects that are up and coming. And the workforce around skilled trades is aging," Detroit Mayor Mary Sheffield said.

Dial said the organization emphasizes "the whole person, care, the mind, body, spirit and community. And in order to elevate and expand, we need more space for that."

The new 30,000-square-foot facility - two miles from the current location will allow the organization to serve up to 5,000 patients a year and is slated to include a pharmacy and offer dental services.

Eric Guzmán covers youth sports culture at the Free Press as a corps member for Report for America, an initiative of The GroundTruth Project. Make a tax deductible contribution to support this work. Contact Eric Guzmán: eguzman@freepress.com; 313-222-1850. Follow him on X and Bluesky.

La alcaldesa anima a los jóvenes de la ciudad a buscar oficios especializados

Fotos por Mandi Wright, Detroit Free Press

Continuado de la página 1

University después de graduarse.

"Sin afán de atacar a ninguna profesión, pero esos trabajos detrás de una computadora van a desaparecer", dijo Freeman. "Siempre vas a tener que comer. Siempre vas a necesitar ropa limpia. Siempre vas a necesitar técnicos de HVAC... así que lo más importante es la seguridad laboral".

El director ejecutivo de Sachse Construction, Todd Sachse, dijo que el evento comenzó hace 12 años como parte de la misión social de la empresa para apoyar a los jóvenes de Detroit mediante habilidades para la vida y el trabajo especializado.

El mejor enfoque, dijo Sachse, no era solo hablar con los estudiantes sobre los oficios, "sino hablar y hacer trabajo práctico con verdaderos hombres y mujeres de oficios especializados, mostrarles lo que hacen y dejar que ellos mismos lo hagan".

Michigan tiene una proyección de 35,000 vacantes anuales de 2022 a 2032 en oficios especializados, según el estado. La alcaldesa de Detroit, Mary Sheffield, notó esta brecha y animó a los jóvenes a explorar este camino.

"Hay decenas de miles de trabajos de oficios especializados disponibles en todo el estado de Michigan. En Detroit, tenemos numerosos proyectos en camino. Y la fuerza laboral de estos oficios está envejeciendo", dijo Sheffield. "Necesitamos que personas más jóvenes asuman estos roles y posiciones, y ayuden a crear y construir el futuro de nuestra ciudad".

Ricky Jackson, de 17 años y estudiante de University Prep, a la izquierda, sostiene su martillo en el aire tras ganar un concurso de martillar. Jackson quiere unirse a los oficios en cuanto se gradúe.

Espacio para crecer

El sitio de construcción, el American Indian Health and Family Services (AIHFS), tiene un significado especial para algunos de los estudiantes que participaron el 16 de abril.

El AIHFS es un centro de salud urbano para nativos americanos, calificado a nivel federal, que también organiza actividades para la juventud. Su programa Dream Seekers atiende a jóvenes de entre 11 y 17 años e incorpora enseñanzas tradicionales de los nativos americanos para ayudar a apoyar el bienestar de cada miembro. El evento del 16 de abril fue la primera vez que los estudiantes de ese grupo tuvieron la oportunidad de ver el nuevo edificio.

Sofia King, de 15 años y originaria de Monroe, ha estado con los Dream Seekers desde 2019 y dijo estar emocionada por el futuro del AIHFS. El grupo ha participado en la planificación del nuevo edificio.

"Lo he visto crecer gracias a muchas personas diferentes y creo que tiene mucho más espacio para crecer aquí, con este edificio y teniendo los recursos para la juventud", dijo King. "Como joven y nativa americana que vive en la ciudad, al no estar conectada con mi gente, esto brinda un lugar con propósito para todos, y creo que eso es increíble".

El AIHFS existe desde 1978 y opera en una antigua iglesia católica en la calle Lawndale Street, en el suroeste de Detroit, atendiendo a unos 2,000 pacientes.

"Necesitábamos expandirnos para realmente optimizar nuestro modelo de atención integral", dijo la directora ejecutiva del AIHFS, Chasity Dial, miembro de la tribu Lumbee de Carolina del Norte. "Ofrecemos atención primaria y servicios de salud conductual con prácticas curativas tradicionales de los nativos americanos, lo cual incorpora la medicina occidental contemporánea con prácticas tradicionales".

"Hay decenas de miles de trabajos de oficios especializados disponibles en todo el estado de Michigan. En Detroit, tenemos numerosos proyectos en camino. Y la fuerza laboral de estos oficios está envejeciendo", dijo la alcaldesa de Detroit, Mary Sheffield.

Dial dijo que la organización enfatiza "el cuidado de la persona en su totalidad, la mente, el cuerpo, el espíritu y la comunidad. Y para poder elevar esto y expandirnos, necesitamos más espacio para ello"

Las nuevas instalaciones de 30,000 pies cuadrados (a dos millas de la ubicación actual) permitirán a la organización atender hasta 5,000 pacientes al año y está programado que incluyan una farmacia y ofrezcan servicios dentales.

Eric Guzmán cubre la cultura de los deportes juveniles en el Free Press como miembro del cuerpo de Report for America, una iniciativa de The GroundTruth Project. Haga una contribución deducible de impuestos para apoyar este trabajo. Contacte a Eric Guzmán: eguzman@freepress.com; 313-222-1850. Sígalo en X y Bluesky.

Jesse Flores, director senior de proyectos de Morrey's Contracting, una empresa hermana de Sachse Construction, habla con los estudiantes antes de que participen en un concurso de clavado.

After Self-deporting

Continued from page 1

the Colombian capital, Niko, 20, has now spent a year there and is attending university. Returning to Colombia is still a challenge for him and his siblings. Bogota is different from any Michigan city; it is a city of 8 million people surrounded by mountains, with a lot of traffic and public transportation. Although he says the food is among the best he has ever tasted, he still struggles with using public transport, the streets packed with motorcycles, and the city noise.

"Some people have told me that I have a lot of very interesting qualities, things that are quite different from a typical person from Bogota," he said. "I don't really have many friends here, since they all have their own lives, and there are days when I feel lonely. All my friends are back in the United States."

López-González's reintegration process extends to all those returned to their home countries after years; it begins the moment returnees arrive in their country of origin, but continues for months, and even years, after they have settled into their communities. Dr. Maria Lapinski-LaFaive, a professor of Intercultural Communication at Michigan State University, explains that returnees face a reentry shock, also called reverse culture shock, a unique set of social and psychosocial challenges, including cultural uprooting and, at times, even language barriers.

"Re-entry shock is sometimes more challenging than other kinds of culture shock in part because it's unexpected. Many people don't know about it and don't anticipate it," said Lapinski-LaFaive. "There are a lot of reasons it is difficult for people to come back to their culture: the home culture has changed, the person's roles may be gone, they may have lost track of the culture, and because of these things, interactions may not go as smoothly as they used to."

It can also be hard for them because the person themselves may have changed, she said. These changes can include the way they speak, dress, think, or act differently from the people in their original culture. "They have seen a different way to live, and this changes how they interact with their first culture," Lapinski-LaFaive mentioned.

Reentry shock can be connected to depression, loneliness, and stress for people; therefore, she recommends that people try to shift their focus to the positive elements of their experiences in both the culture they left and the one they are returning to. She also mentioned that if people are aware that it can happen and have long-term plans on how to address it, it will be helpful.

Immigration agents apprehended Lopez-González's father in early February 2025 and deported him after three weeks. The youth had received a federal summons to appear at a federal building on Michigan Ave. in Detroit.

Upon his arrival, he was told to return with his parents; when Lopez-González did so, he had to translate to his father why he was being taken. Were it not for his younger siblings, his mother would have been arrested as well, and had Lopez-Gonzalez not still been attending high school, all three of them would have been arrested.

"My mom and I lived in constant fear, terrified that if something like that happened to my dad, the very same thing could happen to us. That is why we decided to leave," he says. "We all had to be together or nothing, and it was better to say 'we're leaving' than to be arrested, locked up, and deported with nothing," Lopez-Gonzales said. His mother's fear wasn't unfounded.

Niko with his family before self-deporting to Columbia

In Trump's current America, the decision for many immigrant families, whether or not to stay together, has proven to be a heavy burden. Christine Sauve, spokeswoman for the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, said to EL CENTRAL that same as Lopez-González's family did, "families across Michigan are facing very difficult and heart-wrenching decisions." And added to the impact entailed by the decision to leave or not leave the country, there are the various stages of immigration status that may determine the possibility of a secure return to the country from which they migrated.

The months following his father's deportation, Lopez-Gonzáles described as the strangest of his life; a life that he was just beginning to build amidst college applications, playing in concerts, outings with friends, and his first car. Piece by piece, together with his family, he had to start parting with most of his belongings, choosing what to keep and what to let go of.

"The first week, it was my dad's car. Then came the garage sales," he recounts. "We donated or sold the clothes we no longer wore, and so on; basically, I had to make it fit nearly five years of my life into a single suitcase. I had to choose between taking two suitcases or taking one along with my musical instrument."

But leaving could be more complicated than that. After the family bought their flight tickets, they went to the federal office where the father was arrested to let them know they were finally leaving, Lopez-Gonzáles recalls. For Sauve, how someone leaves may affect their immigration case.

"If someone is already in removal proceedings, they should be careful about pursuing self-deportation," she said. "If they leave the country before concluding removal proceedings, they could risk being ordered removed in absentia after failing to appear at their next hearing. But for cases where voluntary departure may not be an option, self-deportation may make sense, depending on the situation."

Sauve encouraged individuals deciding between voluntary departure and self-deportation to reach out to a legal representative to discuss the risks in their particular case, because it can have future impacts on their immigration cases. "There may be times when individuals need to take these actions, but it is best to review their case before deciding," she added.

From the 11 instruments Lopez-González plays, including the flute, piano, guitar, cello, accordion, and ukulele, the violin is the one he plays better. It became a part of his life, and he took it. After performing continuously with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and receiving musical mentorship at Michigan State University, the young man has planned to complete his music major in Colombia and eventually return to the US.

Erick Diaz Veliz is a Peruvian reporter. He has documents and reports on cultural, social, and political issues in Peru and Michigan as a freelancer. Erick was born in Lima, Peru, and has been living in Lansing since 2018. This article was made possible thanks to a generous grant to EL CENTRAL Hispanic News by Press Forward, the national movement to strengthen communities by reinvigorating local news. Learn more at www.pressforward.news.

Después de autodeportarse

Continuado de la página 4

posibilidad de un regreso seguro al país del que emigraron.

Los meses posteriores a la deportación de su padre, López-González los describe como los más extraños de su vida; una vida que apenas comenzaba a construir entre solicitudes universitarias, tocar en conciertos, salidas con amigos y su primer auto. Poco a poco, junto a su familia, tuvo que empezar a desprenderse de la mayoría de sus pertenencias, eligiendo qué conservar y qué dejar ir.

"La primera semana fue el auto de mi papá. Luego vinieron las ventas de garaje", recuerda. "Donamos o vendimos la ropa que ya no usábamos, y así sucesivamente; básicamente, tuve que meter casi cinco años de mi vida en una sola maleta. Tuve que elegir entre llevar dos maletas o llevar una junto con mi instrumento musical."

Pero irse podía ser más complicado que eso. Después de comprar los boletos de avión, acudieron a la oficina federal donde arrestaron al padre para informar que finalmente se iban, recuerda López-González. Para Sauve, la forma en que alguien se va puede afectar su caso migratorio.

Niko con su familia tras auto-deportarse a Columbia

"Si una persona ya está en proceso de deportación, debe tener cuidado al optar por la autodeportación", dijo. "Si sale del país antes de concluir el proceso, podría arriesgarse a recibir una orden de deportación en ausencia por no presentarse a su próxima audiencia. Pero en casos donde la salida voluntaria no es una opción, la autodeportación puede tener sentido, dependiendo de la situación."

Sauve alentó a quienes deben decidir entre salida voluntaria y autodeportación a consultar con un representante legal para analizar los riesgos en su caso particular, ya que puede tener efectos en el futuro. "Puede haber momentos en que las personas necesiten tomar estas decisiones, pero lo mejor es revisar su caso antes de decidir", añadió.

De los 11 instrumentos que López-González toca, entre ellos la flauta, el piano, la guitarra, el violonchelo, el acordeón y el ukelele, el violín es el que mejor domina. Se convirtió en parte de su vida, y se lo llevó. Tras presentarse continuamente con la Orquesta Sinfónica de Detroit y recibir mentoría musical en la Universidad Estatal de Michigan, el joven planea completar su carrera de música en Colombia y eventualmente regresar a Estados Unidos.

Diles que lo Viste en EL CENTRAL Hispanic News.

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Metro Detroit Golden Gloves

EL CENTRAL
HISPANIC NEWS
SPORTS
Sports Editor: Dan Graschuck/ EL CENTRAL

Story by Dan Graschuck/ EL CENTRAl, and photo by Bob Ryder (fightnews.com)

The Metro Detroit Golden Gloves Tournament of Champions took place over the last two weeks, at Bert's Warehouse in Eastern Market. The winners will represent Metro Detroit Golden Gloves at the National Golden Gloves Tournament held in Tulsa, Oklahoma (May 11-16, 2026)..

Photos below are highlights from the finals at the Metro Detroit Golden Gloves

Metro Detroit Golden Gloves Tournament Champions, who will be competing in National Golden Gloves Tournament

Metro Detroit Golden Gloves Tournament Team Champions, Tony Harrison's Superbad Boxing Gym

Former WBC World Champion, Tony Harrison, presents Metro Detroit Golden Gloves Tournament MVP award to Brendon Graff (of Empire Boxing Gym) , the 176 lbs Elite Champion

Bert Dearing Jr. (owner of Bert's Warehouse) is presented with Metro Detroit Golden Gloves Hall of Fame award. His support has been instrumental in keeping Metro Detroit Golden Gloves going in Detroit

Dikwa Double Downs Detroit City

EL CENTRAL HISPANIC NEWS

Pateando la No. 5

SPORTS

David Levine
EL CENTRAL

Pittsburgh Riverhounds striker Albert Dikwa scored early in the first half and late in the second half to give the defending USL champions a 2-1 win over DCFC on a soggy night in the Steel City. Le Rouge didn't come prepared to start the game at the same time as the champions and paid the price.

Both teams gathered at the center circle at the start to continue the players' union protest over the lack of a new collective bargaining agreement with the USL. At the start of every half the players unite in protest and refuse to play the first minute. Unfortunately, immediately after normal hostilities resumed, only the Riverhounds looked sharp. The hosts took possession and caught a rejiggered DCFC back line napping. Dikwa nipped in behind Rio Hope-Gund with Devon Amoo-Mensah drawn out of position to get on the end of Perrin Barnes lob and lifted the ball over Carlos Herrera to give the hosts the early lead.

After a grueling midweek Open Cup loss to the Chicago Fire, DCFC coach Danny Dichio opted to rotate his players a little. Callum Montgomery, a tower of strength during the early stages of the season, started on the bench. Hope-Gund came in to play as the right center back, shifting Amoo-Mensah to the left. The change seemed to unsettle the captain and he looked uncomfortable much of the night. Ates Diouf and Ryan Williams also started on the substitutes' bench. Diouf's absence was felt in the lack of incisive attacking play coming from the left side.

Dichio handed first starts of the season to Connor Rutz and Aeden Stanley. Neither made enough of an impact in the attack to retain their places when Louisville City comes to town on May 2 for a nationally televised game on the CBS Sports Network. Dichio will have to hope that Maxi Rodriguez will not be out long term. Even after a year away, he was making the attack go in the early stages of the season. Watching him limp out of the Open Cup game after barely twenty minutes makes one wonder if he returned too early and suffered a more serious injury. The return of players like defender Michael Bryant and forward Ben Morris cannot come too soon either.

With his team struggling to make any headway against the Riverhounds stifling defense, Dichio had to go to his bench during the second half. Diouf and Chisom Egbuchulam came on for Rutz and Stanley just after the hour mark. They helped increase DCFC's possession, but the Riverhounds found a way to block most shots headed towards Nico Campuzano's goal. Of DCFC's 19 shot attempts, the hosts blocked 10 in a brilliant display of well timed challenges. Ryan Williams and Callum Montgomery joined the fray fifteen minutes from time as the eleven on the field looked like a much stronger unit at the end than at the beginning.

It wasn't to be for Le Rouge, who have not won a league game on the road since 2024. Dikwa doubled the Riverhounds lead in the 83rd minute with a firm finish in front of goal. Egbuchulam pulled a goal back with a minute left in stoppage time, but it was too little too late for DCFC. Darren Smith got the assist, giving him five goals and one assist in the league. He also had DCFC's consolation goal against the Fire, meaning that he is far and away the club's biggest attacking contributor through the first six weeks of games.

Like recent years, DCFC will struggle for results while their expected starters remain out. They rely on their first eleven more than most teams. A limited budget limits the quality of replacements they can bring in. When Bryant returns, he would be a good fit at right back with Haruki Yamazaki moving up to the right wing position. Yamazaki has had a solid start this year. His dribbling skills attract defenders forcing them to foul or let him go by. He would balance Diouf's slashing style on the left. Maxi Rodriguez would play under Smith as a second forward or attacking midfielder. With Abdoulaye Diop, Kobe Hernandez-Foster and Ryan Williams competing for two central midfield spots, there are options in that area. Tommy Silva has come in and been solid as the left back. Carlos Herrera has claimed the number one goalkeeper spot, but Carlos Saldana is a strong option in reserve. Fully fit, DCFC can be a good team that finishes in the top half of the Eastern Conference. However, keeping the team healthy has been a major struggle in recent years. They now have a weekend off to recuperate. For the moment they are third in the East, six points behind Louisville with a game in hand, making the May 2 game one that could give DCFC momentum and confidence with a win.

Night Of the Knockouts XL

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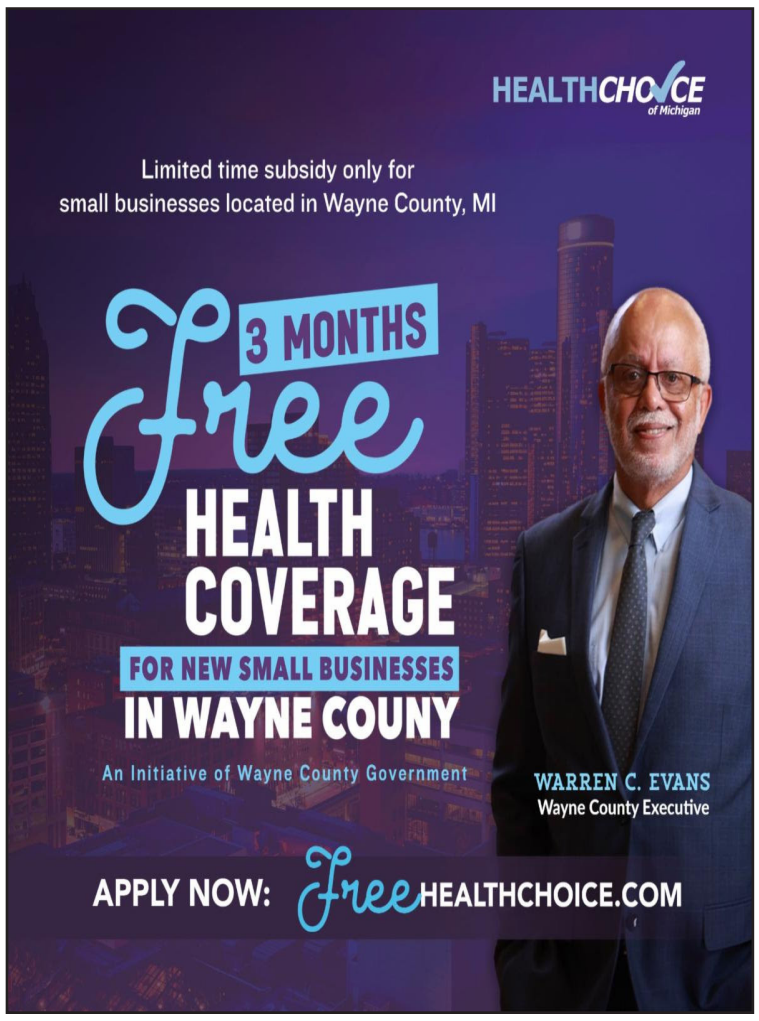

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EDITORIAL OPINION

Guest Opinion:

What You Can Do NOW
The 10 Most Important Ways to Resist Now.

By Robert Reich

In light of Trump's increasingly cruel and bonkers behavior — toward Iran, toward the pope, his posts, his bottomless vengeance, his continuing ICE raids, his continuing use of the Justice Department to target his enemies, his shameless corruption — many of you want to know: "What can I do now?" Here are 10 recommendations, in rough order of importance.

1. Protect the decent and hardworking members of your communities who are most vulnerable.

This is an urgent moral call to action. As Trump's ICE and Border Patrol continue their roundups and deportations, many of our neighbors and friends are endangered. They and their families are understandably frightened.

Trump's executive orders allow ICE to arrest undocumented immigrants at or near schools, places of worship, health care sites, shelters, and relief centers — thereby deterring them from sending their kids to school or getting help they need.

If you trust your mayor or city manager, check in with their offices to see what they are doing to protect vulnerable families in your community. Join others in voluntary efforts to keep ICE away from hospitals, schools, and shelters. And to alert all members of your community when ICE is present.

Organize and mobilize your community to support it as a sanctuary city and to support your state as a sanctuary state. Trump's Justice Department is investigating cities and states that go against federal immigration orders. Your voice and organizing can be helpful in fighting back.

You might also consider sponsoring a refugee family.

If you haven't done so, I recommend you order these red cards from the Immigrant Legal Resource Center and make them available in and around your community: Red Cards | Tarjetas Rojas | Immigrant Legal Resource Center | ILRC. You might also find these of use: Immigration Preparedness Toolkit | Immigrant Legal Resource Center | ILRC.

2. Protect them against bigotry and hate — LGBTQ+, immigrants, "hyphenated" Americans, and people of color.

Trump continues to try to make life far more difficult for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other people through executive orders, changes in laws, alterations in civil rights laws, or changes in how such laws are enforced. He's also fueling bigotry against immigrants, especially Muslims and immigrants from Iran, and against people of color.

I urge you to work with others in being vigilant against prejudice and bigotry, wherever it might break out. When you see or hear it, call it out. Join with others to stop it. Get your churches and synagogues involved. If you trust your local city officials, get them involved. If you trust your local police, alert them as well.

3. Help protect officials in your community or state whom Trump and his administration are targeting for vengeance.

Some may be low-level officials, such as election workers. If they don't have the means to legally defend themselves, you might help them or consider a GoFundMe campaign. If you hear of anyone seeking to harm or intimidate them, immediately alert local law-enforcement officials.

4. Organize and mobilize for the midterms.

It's not too early to plan to get out the vote on or before November 3 — ensuring that people who are eligible to vote are registered, that they know when and how to vote, that they know how to vote by mail or are otherwise able to get to polling places. Knock on doors, raise money for progressive candidates, and mobilize your friends, neighbors, colleagues and acquaintances. Join your local Indivisible organization (find the nearest group at www.indivisible.org).

If you hear of any plans for ICE or Border Patrol agents to be deployed at voting places, contact the ACLU (you can locate the nearest office by visiting www.aclu.org/affiliates).

If you hear or know of any plans by Republican election officials to meddle in the upcoming elections, notify the League of Women Voters at www.lwv.org or local representatives of the Democratic Party.

5. Participate in or organize boycotts of companies that are enabling the Trump regime — including Elon Musk's X and Tesla, Amazon, Meta (Facebook), and any companies that advertise on X or on Fox News.

Never underestimate the effectiveness of consumer boycotts. Corporations invest heavily in their brand names and the goodwill associated with them. Loud, boisterous, attention-getting boycotts can harm brand names and reduce the prices of corporations' shares of stock.

6. To the extent you are able, fund groups that are litigating against Trump.

Much of the action stopping Trump and his regime is occurring in the federal courts. The groups initiating litigation that I know and trust include the American Civil Liberties Union, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics, Environmental Defense Fund, Southern Poverty Law Center, Center for Biological Diversity, Democracy Forward, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and Common Cause. All could use your help and encouragement.

7. Spread the truth.

Get news through reliable sources, and spread it. If you hear anyone spreading lies and Trump propaganda, including local media, contradict them with facts and their sources. Urge friends, relatives, and acquaintances to avoid Trump propaganda outlets such as Fox News, Newsmax, X, and, increasingly, Facebook and Instagram. They are filled with hateful bigotry and toxic and dangerous lies. For some people, these propaganda sources can also be addictive; help the people you know wean themselves off them.

Here are some of the sources I currently rely on for the truth: Democracy Now, Business Insider, The New Yorker, The American Prospect, The Atlantic, Americans for Tax Fairness, Economic Policy Institute, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, The Guardian, ProPublica, Labor Notes, The Lever, Popular Information, Heather Cox Richardson, and, of course, this Substack.

8. Push for progressive measures in your community and state.

Local and state governments retain significant power. Join groups that are moving your city or state forward, in contrast to regressive moves at the federal level. Lobby, instigate, organize, and fundraise for progressive legislators. Support progressive leaders.

9. Call your members of Congress.

Tell them to oppose Trump and support progressive initiatives. And keep calling! Your calls count. (Staffers do keep count of how many constituents are for or against various issues.) The main U.S. Capitol switchboard phone number is (202) 224-3121. The operator can connect you directly to the office of your Senator or Representative. To find your specific representative, you can also look up their contact information on www.house.gov or www.senate.gov.

10. Keep the faith. Do not give up on America.

This is a long and difficult slog but we have no choice. The fight we're in will determine the future of this nation and much of the world. I understand if you're tired and sometimes discouraged, but we can and must win.

Trump won the popular vote in 2024 by only 1.5 points, and 35 percent of eligible voters didn't even vote. By any historic measure, this was a squeaker. In the House of Representatives, the Republicans' lead is the smallest since the Great Depression. In the Senate, Republicans lost half of 2024's competitive Senate races, including in four states Trump won. Since Trump's inauguration in January 2025, Democrats have won all special elections or dramatically over-performed in them.

America has deep problems, to be sure. Which is why we can't give up on it — or give up the fights for social justice, equal political rights, equal opportunity, and the rule of law. The forces of Trumpian repression and neofascism would like nothing better than for us to give up. Then they'd win it all. We cannot allow them to.

We will never give up.

Opinions in this column are not necessarily those of the Publisher or Editor

Do you have a contrary opinion? Write us at info@elcentralmedia.com

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HISPANIC NEWS

SPECIAL WORLD'S CULTURES

Dominica

The Kalinago People

Dominica is home to the largest population of the Kalinago people, also known as Caribs, who arrived on the island in the 14th century, living alongside and blending with the Arawak-Taíno. They developed a strong seafaring culture and, thanks to their resilience and strength, prevented the Spanish from establishing themselves on the island.

Today, the Kalinago are located in the eastern region. Their social organization emphasized personal development in areas such as warfare, religion, and navigation. Power was not hereditary, as in monarchies, which made

their society more egalitarian and decentralized.

They developed agricultural systems based on crop rotation, cultivating cassava, corn, and yam in ways that supported sustainability and soil regeneration.

Their navigational skills allowed them to carve large canoes, which they used to travel to other islands, especially Saint Vincent.

Novelist: Jean Rhys

Although the literature from Dominica is not widely recognized, the novelist Jean Rhys—born Ella Gwendolen Rees Williams—infuses her work with a subtle musicality through her characters. In each of her novels, someone sings or hums; perhaps a reflection of the island's own vitality.

She was born in 1890 in Dominica, when it was still part of the British Empire, into a family with dark skin and hair, while she stood out for her fair skin and blonde hair. Her appearance, so different from that of her family, along with her personality, set her apart from other girls her age and made her feel constantly scrutinized.

She died at the age of 88 in 1979 in Exeter, United Kingdom. She was married three times and had a daughter with Willem Johan Marie Lenglet, whom she named Maryvonne Moerman.

She studied mainly in London and Paris, although she also lived in other European cities. As a result, her literature explores the condition of the migrant: someone who belongs neither here nor there, but to at least two worlds.

In her words: "Reading makes us all immigrants; it takes

us away from home, but, more importantly, it finds homes for us everywhere."

Her work reveals the humanity of her characters through deep sadness and, perhaps, the despair that accompanies it—something that led to repeated rejection by publishers.

She returned to Dominica after the Second World War, where she rediscovered her inspiration.

Her reflection on literature and migration may seem simple, but isn't that what we seek in every new world and every experience we live through—the chance to shape other dreams, other homes? Not only through the parallel lives we inhabit as readers—and now also as viewers of films or even short videos on social media, where our sense of self multiplies, along with the spaces we inhabit—but also through our own migrations in real life.

Sigue cada semana en
EL CENTRAL Hispanic News
ESPECIAL CULTURAS DEL MUNDO,
by Mariana Ayón RV

Dominica

The Caribbean island of Dominica, a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, is known by the Kalinago people as "Waitukubuli," meaning "Great is His Body." It is a vivid expression of the Caribbean's natural splendor. The island is home to hot springs, reefs, beaches, rivers, and waterfalls that draw visitors from around the world, arriving by air and cruise ship, mainly from the Americas as well as Europe.

Although the island was inhabited long before Europeans arrived in the Caribbean, it is considered to have been discovered in 1493 during Columbus's second voyage. It was never easily colonized, however, due to the fierce resistance of the Kalinago people. France claimed it in 1690, and Britain in 1763, after the Seven Years' War. In 1960, it gained independence from Great Britain and became part of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Among its natural treasures are reserves recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, such as the tropical rainforest of Morne Trois Pitons National Park.

The island is covered in lush vegetation that remains green year-round, radiant in its natural beauty.

Boiling Lake is the second largest of its kind in the world, with thermal waters reaching temperatures of up to 89°C (192°F).

Unlike other Caribbean islands, Dominica is the only one where pre-Columbian indigenous peoples still live, such as the Kalinago, who have held their ground against social and political pressures, preserving their presence on the island.

ESPECIAL CULTURAS DEL MUNDO

Dominica

Pueblo Kalinago

En Dominica se encuentra la mayor población de los indígenas Kalinago, también conocidos como Caribes, quienes llegaron a la isla en el siglo XIV asimilándose junto con los Arawak-Taínos. Los Kalinago contaban con una gran cultura de navegación, e impidieron el establecimiento de los españoles en la isla debido a su gran fuerza y resistencia.

El pueblo Kalinago se encuentra en la región oriente de la isla, su organización buscaba potenciar la guerra, religión y navegación a través de la formación personal, es decir, el

poder no era hereditario, como sucede con las monarquías, lo que hacía de la sociedad Kalinago una sociedad igualitaria descentralizada.

Los Kalinago crearon sistemas de agricultura para cultivar mandioca, maíz, ñame a través de un sistema de rotación de cultivos, lo que les permitía una agricultura sostenible que permitiera la regeneración de la tierra.

Sus habilidades en navegación les permitieron tallar grandes canoas que les permitía desplazarse a otras islas, principalmente a San Vicente, Saint Vincent.

Novelista: Jean Rhys

Aunque poco reconocida la literatura Dominica, la novelista conocida como Jean Rhys, bautizada como Ella Gwendolen Rees Williams, sus novelas llevan música a través de sus personajes, pues se encuentra en todas ellas alguien que canta, que vive tarareando, quizá es éste un reflejo de la misma naturaleza, la vitalidad de la isla.

Nació en 1890 en Dominica cuando ésta aún era parte del imperio británico en el seno de una familia de piel morena y cabello oscuro distinguiéndose por su cabello rubio y piel clara. Rhys sentía el escrutinio continuo por su aspecto tan diferente al del resto de su familia, aunado a su carácter tan diferente al del resto de las niñas de su edad.

Murió a los 88 años en 1979 en Exeter, Reino Unido. Tuvo tres matrimonios y una hija con Willem Johan Marie Lenglet, a quien llamó Maryvonne Moerman

Estudió en Londres y París, principalmente, aunque vivió en otras

ciudades europeas. De ahí que su literatura exponga la condición del migrante, aquel que no es de aquí y no es de allá, sino de al menos dos mundos.

En una frase, Jean Rhys nos dice: "leer nos hacen a todos inmigrantes, nos aleja de casa, pero, aún más importante, encuentra hogares para nosotros en cualquier lugar".

Su literatura expone la humanidad de los personajes a través de profundas tristezas y quizá, también la desesperanza que esta trae consigo, lo que la lleva a ser continuamente rechazada por las editoriales.

Vuelve a Dominica después de la segunda guerra mundial, donde se reencuentra con la inspiración.

Jean Rhys puede parecer simplista con su frase sobre la literatura y los migrantes, mas, ¿no es eso lo que buscamos en cada nuevo mundo y experiencia que vivimos la consolidación de otros sueños, otros hogares? No sólo con las vidas paralelas que experimentamos como lectores y ahora también como espectadores en películas, y, por tanto, los hogares en que residimos, sino también con nuestras migraciones de residencia.

Tell them you saw it in Diles que lo viste en
EL CENTRAL
Hispanic News

Dominica

La isla antillana Dominica es miembro de la Mancomunidad de naciones, llamada por los Kalinago: "Waitukubuli", que significa "Grande es su cuerpo"; es muestra del esplendor natural del Caribe. En la isla residen aguas termales, arrecifes, playas, ríos y cascadas que reciben a turistas de todo el mundo con vuelos y cruceros procedentes principalmente del continente americano, como del europeo.

Aunque la isla ya estaba habitada desde mucho antes de la llegada de los europeos al Caribe, se considera que fue descubierta hasta 1493 en el segundo viaje de Colón, mas no pudo ser colonizada por la feroz defensa de los Kalinagos. Fue conquistada y reclamada por Francia en 1690 y en 1763 por los británicos después de una guerra de siete años. En 1960 alcanzó su independencia de la Gran Bretaña, para reconocerse como un país miembro de la Mancomunidad de las Naciones Británicas.

Cuenta con reservas naturales consideradas Patrimonio Natural de la UNESCO, como lo es el bosque tropical Parque Nacional Morne Trois Pitons.

La isla está cubierta de de una vegetación que se mantiene verde todo el año con su radiante esplendor natural.

El lago Boiling es el segundo más grande del mundo con aguas termales que alcanzan temperaturas de hasta 89°c ó 192°F.

A diferencia de otras islas del Caribe, es Dominica la única donde aún residen indígenas precolombinos, como lo es el Pueblo Kalinago con su continua fuerza de carácter para resistir las presiones sociales y políticas y mantener su representación en el territorio de la isla.

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